(Recollections of the *Affair.*^) What constituted Rousseau's strength in his time was that, being the only one in his party, he was able to believe that his party was right. A party is always compromised by *the others;* there are always too many of them; and if there were fewer, the *party* would be too weak.

Yes, Rousseau's strength came from his solitude; for, since there is stupidity everywhere, the danger comes from the fact that one's partisans may exaggerate it; you see that stupidity too clearly and you cease to be convinced. So long as you remain alone on your side, you triumph; the stupidity seems to be all on the other side, and this helps you to get yourself in deeper.

And people think that it is for the sake of meditation that the most convinced theorists need solitude!

No matter: at that time they seemed to lack experience; the Roman experience had become merely historical; it was easy to reason about it. That of the French Revolution is superb. We are still crushed by it.

^ The *affaire' Dreyfus,* the fierce controversy that split Franco into two camps between the condemnation of Captain Allied Dreyfus for treason in 1895 and his rehabilitation in 1906.